

IN THE CLAIMS

1. (Currently amended) A surgical kit for treating incontinence comprising:  
an implantable material suitable for a sling procedure,  
at least one of a first type of needle suitable for a sling procedure, and  
at least one of a second type of needle suitable for a sling procedure, ~~wherein the first~~  
~~type of needle is different than the second type of needle,~~ and  
a dilator for associating said implantable material suitable for a sling procedure with  
at least one of said first or second types of needles,  
wherein the first type of needle comprises a substantially straight needle and the  
second type of needle comprises a needle with a curved portion.

2. (Canceled).

3. (Original) A surgical kit according to claim 1 further including a synthetic insertion  
sheath associated with the implantable material to form a sling assembly.

4. (Previously presented) A surgical kit according to claim 3 wherein said dilator is  
adapted for associating the sling assembly with a surgical needle.

5. (Canceled).

6. (Original) A surgical kit according to claim 1 wherein the first type of needle  
comprises a needle with at least two handles.

7. (Original) A surgical kit according to claim 1 wherein the first type of needle includes an end portion with a passageway for receiving a suture.

8. (Original) A surgical kit according to claim 7 wherein the passageway for receiving a suture comprises a hole.

9. (Currently amended) A surgical kit for treating incontinence comprising:  
an implantable material suitable for a sling procedure,  
at least one of a first type of needle suitable for a sling procedure, and  
at least one of a second type of needle suitable for a sling procedure, wherein the first  
type of needle is different than the second type of needle, and  
a dilator adapted to associate said implantable material suitable for a sling procedure  
with at least one of said first or second types of needles.

~~A surgical kit according to claim 1~~ wherein the first type of needle comprises a movable inner member with a blunt end portion having a suture passageway and an outer sheath member with a sheath end, and

means for moving the blunt end portion between i) an extended position with the suture passageway extending beyond the outer sheath member, and ii) a retracted position with the blunt end portion spaced closer to the end of the outer sheath member than in the extended position.

10. (Original) A surgical kit according to claim 9 wherein the sheath end comprises a substantially sharp surface for cutting tissue, and the first type of needle includes a means for locking the blunt end portion in the extended position.

11. (Original) A surgical kit according to claim 1 wherein the first type of needle includes at least two straight portions situated at a predetermined angle.

12. (Original) A surgical kit according to claim 1 further comprising a first type of handle and a second type of handle wherein the first type of handle is different than the second type of handle.

13. (Original) A surgical kit according to claim 1 wherein the first type of needle is larger than the second type of needle.

14. (Original) A surgical kit according to claim 1 wherein the first type of needle includes a bladder perforation detector.

15-35. (Canceled)

36. (Previously presented) A surgical sling procedure for treating incontinence comprising the steps of:

providing a surgical kit with an implantable material suitable for a sling procedure, at least one of a first type of needle that is sized and shaped for inserting a sling, at least one of a second type of needle that is sized and shaped for inserting a sling, and a dilator for associating said implantable material suitable for a sling procedure with at least one of said first or second type of needle, wherein the first type of needle is different than the second type of needle,

selecting the first or the second type of needle, and

implanting the implantable material using the selected needle.

37. (Currently amended) A method of implanting a sling to treat urinary incontinence in a patient comprising the steps of:

providing a surgical kit comprising at least one guide needle, and at least one sling transport needle with a tip, a sling attached to the sling transport needle, and an adapter having two ends with a gentle taper near one end, said adaptor further having tip receiving surfaces for receiving the tip of the sling transport needle,

creating at least one vaginal incision,

creating at least one suprapubic incision,

initially passing the guide needle through the suprapubic incision and then through the vaginal incision,

attaching the adapter to the needle,

placing the tip of the sling transport needle in the tip receiving surfaces of the adapter,

and

guiding the sling transport needle from the vaginal incision to the suprapubic incision with the guide needle to implant the sling.

38. (Currently amended) A surgical kit for treating incontinence comprising:

at least one guide needle,

at least one sling transport needle with a tip, and a sling attached to the sling transport needle, and

a dilator having two ends with a gentle taper near one end, said adaptor further having tip receiving surfaces for receiving the tip of the sling transport needle and having means for attaching to the at least one guide needle.

39. (Previously presented) A surgical kit according to claim 38 wherein the dilator is integral with the guide needle.

40. (Canceled)

41. (Canceled)

42. (Previously presented) A surgical kit for treating incontinence comprising:  
an implantable material suitable for a sling procedure,  
a needle that is sized and shaped for inserting a sling, the needle having surfaces for engaging a handle,  
a dilator for associating said implantable material suitable for a sling procedure with said needle,  
at least one of a first type of handle having surfaces for attaching the handle to the needle, and  
at least one of a second type of handle having surfaces for attaching the handle to the needle, wherein the first type of handle is different than the second type of handle.

43. (Previously presented) A surgical kit for treating incontinence comprising:  
an implantable material suitable for a sling procedure,  
at least one of a first type of needle suitable for a sling procedure, and  
at least one of a second type of needle suitable for a sling procedure, wherein the first type of needle is different than the second type of needle,  
a dilator for associating said implantable material suitable for a sling procedure with at least one of the first and second type of needle,

wherein at least one of said first and second type of needle comprises means for transporting said implantable sling material and dilator in a body of a patient.

44. (New) A surgical kit for treating incontinence comprising:  
an implantable material suitable for a sling procedure, and  
an article adapted to implant said implantable material suitable for a sling procedure,  
said article including,

a needle including an inner member and an outer member, and  
a handle including a movable portion, and integrated with the needle,  
wherein said inner member of said needle is moveable relative to the handle.

45. (New) A surgical kit for treating incontinence comprising:  
an implantable material suitable for a sling procedure, said implantable material  
including a suburethral portion and at least two arm portions situated on either side of said  
suburethral portion, said suburethral portion formed of a mesh of a different treatment than  
the mesh of the remainder of said synthetic surgical mesh, and  
at least one needle suitable for a sling procedure.

46. (New) A surgical kit for treating incontinence comprising:  
a sling assembly, said sling assembly including,  
a synthetic surgical mesh,  
a removable synthetic insertion sheath situated about the surgical mesh and  
including first and second ends, and

an association loop including at least one suture operatively associated with the insertion sheath and extending beyond the first end of the insertion sheath a length sufficient to afford attachment of the sling assembly to a needle; and at least one needle suitable for a sling procedure.

47. (New) A method of implanting a sling for the treatment of urinary incontinence in a woman, said method including the steps of:

providing a sling and at least two needles suitable for a sling procedure, said sling including a first and second end, a sleeve, and an association loop extending beyond each end of said sling,

creating a transverse abdominal incision on a first side of midline just above a pubic symphysis of a patient,

creating a first anterior vaginal wall incision,

inserting a first needle through said first transverse abdominal incisions,

guiding said first needle along a posterior portion of the patient's pubic bone to exit through said first vaginal incision, such that an end of said first needle protrudes through said first vaginal incision,

repeating said process on a contralateral side of said patient, such that a second needle protrudes through a second vaginal incision on a contralateral side of a patient than said first needle,

attaching said first end of said sling to a first needle protruding through a first vaginal incision by using an association loop in said sling,

attaching said second end of said sling to a second needle protruding through a second vaginal incision using another association loop in said sling,

pulling said first and second needles through the abdominal incisions in order to lead the first and second ends of the attached sling through the abdominal incisions, adjusting the sling to a therapeutically acceptable position, removing the sleeve from said sling, cutting the ends of said slings extending beyond said abdominal incisions, and closing all incisions.

48. (New) The method of claim 47, further comprising the step of:  
performing cystoscopy to confirm bladder integrity following passage of at least one of said needles from at least one of said abdominal incisions through at least one of said vaginal incisions.

49. (New) The method of claim 47, further comprising the step of:  
confirming the correct positioning of the sling in a therapeutically acceptable position with a centering indicia.

50. (New) A method of implanting a sling with a sleeve for the treatment of urinary incontinence in women comprising the steps of:  
providing a sling and at least two needles suitable for a sling procedure, said sling including a first and second end, a sleeve, and an association loop extending beyond each end of said sling,  
creating an abdominal incision on a first side of a patient's midline just above a pubic symphysis,  
creating a first anterior vaginal wall incision on the first side of said patient,  
attaching a first needle to said sling with a sleeve,



advancing the first needle in a direction from the vaginal incision to the abdominal incision in order to implant said sling attached to said first needle,  
repeating said process on a contralateral side of said patient,  
adjusting the sling to a therapeutically acceptable position,  
removing the sleeve from said sling,  
cutting the ends of said slings extending beyond said abdominal incisions,  
closing all incisions.

51. (New) The method of claim 50, further comprising the step of:

performing cystoscopy to confirm bladder integrity following passage of at least one of said needles from at least one of said vaginal incisions through at least one of said abdominal incisions.

52. (New) The method of claim 50, further comprising the step of:

confirming the correct positioning of the sling in a therapeutically acceptable position with centering indicia.